

Appl. No. 10/669,165
Amdt. dated December 14, 2005
Reply to Office action of September 14, 2005

REMARKS

Applicant has received the Office action dated September 14, 2005, in which the Examiner: 1) rejected claims 1-3, 6, 14-16, and 19 as allegedly anticipated by McLain (U.S. Pat. No. 4,309,924); 2) rejected claims 1-3 as allegedly anticipated by Mendenhall (U.S. Pat. No. 1,301,958); 3) rejected claims 4 and 5 as allegedly unpatentable over Mendenhall (U.S. Pat. No. 1,301,958); and 4) asserted allowable subject matter in claims 17 and 18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but otherwise allowable.

With this response, Applicant cancels claims 1 – 16 and 19, and amends claim 17. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

I. CLAIM CANCELLATIONS

With this response, Applicant cancels claims 1 – 16 and 19. The cancellation of these claims is without prejudice to later asserting these claims, such as in a divisional or continuation application.

II. EFFECTIVELY ALLOWED CLAIMS

In the Office Action dated September 14, 2005, the Examiner objected to claims 17 and 18 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but otherwise allowable. With this response, Applicant amends claim 17 to be in independent form, including the limitations of its base claim. By virtue of its dependency, claim 17 already contained these limitations.

Thus, claim 17 should be in condition for allowance. And claim 18, which depends from claim 17, should also be in condition for allowance.

III. CONCLUSION

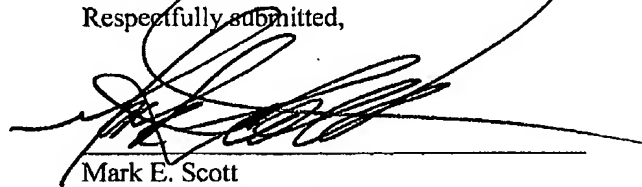
In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicant may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the cited art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are

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required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Conley Rose, P.C., Deposit Account No. 03-2769.

Respectfully submitted,



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